

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on June 13, 2003. Claims 1, 2 and 4 have been amended and claims 1-6 remain pending in the present application as claims 7-10 stand withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction requirement raised by Examiner. Applicants note and appreciate Examiner's indication of allowability of claims 3 and 6. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness. Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Creamer, U.S. Patent No. 4,025,671. Lastly, claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creamer in view of Bolyard Jr. et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,520,237¹. While Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1 and 4 to more sharply define the present invention over the prior art of record and respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

¹Examiner's rejection of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creamer in view of Bolyard Jr. et al. is believed by Applicants to be a typographical error as Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of claim 6 is patentable over the prior art of record as set forth in paragraph 9 of the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants will respond to this rejection as solely a rejection of claim 4 under § 103 in view of the combination of Creamer and Bolyard Jr. et al.

In particular, Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1 and 4 to recite a "non-contact" method of coating an elongated band. According to the method of the present invention, liquid material is dispensed from the outlet of the liquid dispenser toward the band with the pattern of the dispensed liquid material expanding during flight toward the band so as to coat the band with liquid material. Applicants have further amended independent claim 1 to recite that the band is spaced from the outlet with one of the side edges of the band positioned closer, in a direction of the dispensing axis, to the outlet than the other side edge of the band. Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of method steps recited in each of amended independent claims 1 and 4, and claims depending therefrom, is not taught or suggested by the prior art of record and the rejections should be withdrawn.

With respect to the Examiner's rejections of claims 3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the Examiner is referred to page 14, lines 5-17 of Applicants' disclosure which fully describes how the two major surfaces of the band are coated according to the principles of the present invention. In particular, the dispensing outlet dispenses a bead toward the major surface 35d of the band so that the pattern of the bead expands in the cross-machine (CD) direction during flight toward the band. The bead first engages the side edge 35b and major surface 35d of the band and then wraps around the band to coat the opposite major surface 35c of the band as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. Accordingly, Applicants

respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are improper and should be withdrawn.

With respect to the rejection of independent claim 1 as being anticipated by Creamer, Applicants submit that the coating method of Creamer requires contact between the coating head (12) and the strip (14) to form the bands of continuous coating on the strip. In Creamer, liquid material is dispensed from the coating head (12) through branch passages (32) which terminate in openings located centrally within respective land areas (24). The dispensed liquid material forms a meniscus at the surface of each land which is in contact with both the strip and the land surface, thereby providing a stock of material which is picked up by the moving strip as it leaves the coating head. In this way, bands of continuous coating are coated onto the strip each having a width corresponding to the width of the respective land surface in contact with the strip.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Creamer is directed to a "contact" coating method and the dispensed liquid material of Creamer does not expand during flight toward the strip of material as recited in amended independent claim 1. Moreover, in Creamer, the strip lies in a generally horizontal plane so neither edge of the strip is positioned closer, in a direction of the dispensing axis, to the outlet as recited in amended independent claim 1.

For each of these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of method steps recited in amended independent claim 1 is not taught

or suggested by Creamer taken alone, or in combination with the other prior art of record, and the rejections should be withdrawn.

With respect to the rejection of independent claim 4 as being obvious over Creamer in view of Bolyard Jr. et al., the rejection must fail as the primary Creamer reference is directed to a "contact" coating method as discussed above and, therefore, there is no reasonable basis for combining the references as sought in the rejection. Moreover, Examiner will note in Fig. 4 of Bolyard Jr. et al. that as the dispenser (10) is rotated, the strands (20) are rotated therewith, so that the orientation of the strands (20) relative to the dispenser (10) does not change. Therefore, in the alternative orientations of the dispenser and strands as shown in Figs. 3 and 4 of Bolyard Jr. et al., the dispensing axis of each outlet is essentially normal to the surface of each strand facing the outlet and therefore not oblique thereto as claimed by Applicants. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of independent claim 4 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Moreover, as claims 2-3 and 5-6 depend from allowable independent claims 1 and 4, respectively, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of elements not taught or suggested by the prior art of record, Applicants submit that these claims are allowable as well.

Applicants note that the references A.L, A.R, A.S and A.T on the Information Disclosure Statement filed by Applicants and the reference A.R in the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed by Applicants have not been

initialized by Examiner. The Examiner's consideration of these cited references and initialization of the filed PTO-1449 forms is respectfully requested in due course.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If there is any issue that remains which may be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve the same and expedite the allowance of this application.

Applicants do not believe that this response requires that any fees be submitted, however, if any fees are deemed necessary, these may be charged to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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